

BACKGROUND

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NSC BRIEFING

20 May 1959

BUENOS AIRES MEETING ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- I. The meeting in Buenos Aires from 28 April to 8 May of the Committee of 21, a body set up by the twenty-one American republics to find ways to promote economic growth, appears to have aroused a relatively favorable reaction in Latin America.
  - A. The Committee of 21 first met in September 1958 as an outgrowth of Brazilian President Kubitschek's Operation Pan-America, a plan to combat the underdevelopment which Kubitschek termed the weakest link in hemisphere unity.
- II. The meeting was unusually free of acrimonious criticism of the United States, in part because many of the Latin Americans believed general agreement had been achieved that the most important inter-American problem is increasing production at a pace adequate to meet the needs of Latin America's expanding population.
  - A. The only serious snag in the proceedings was the speech of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro on 2 May.
    1. Castro stated that despite US good faith the United States had done too little. He called for \$30,000,000,000 for a Latin American development program over the next ten years.
    2. Despite an initial favorable reaction to the Castro speech by certain delegations, the proposal was shelved on 7 May because most of the Latin Americans considered it impractical.
- III. The United States agreed with the Latin American view that the committee should continue in limited form as a spur to the Organization of American states, which will execute recommended measures through its Inter-American Economic and Social Council.

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- A. A sub-committee was set up to act until the eleventh Inter-American Conference in Quito next February, when economic progress will again be in the forefront of inter-American discussions.